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SUBJECT: UN CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT: SEEKING MOMENTUM FOR  
COPENHAGEN

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Secretary-General's September 22 high-level event on climate change drew leaders from nearly one hundred countries just a day before the start of the UN General Assembly and three months before the anticipated Climate Change Convention ministerial in Copenhagen. Leaders from a select number of countries including the U.S. and China addressed the plenary while nearly 50 others created video statements available online. The SYG also hosted a dinner for 24 national leaders, including President Obama, to further the climate change dialogue at the highest levels. While only a few public statements contained new proposals or initiatives, there was wide support for greater collective effort at achieving a positive outcome in Copenhagen, and increased awareness of the consequences of inaction. The Secretary-General expressed satisfaction with the "political will" shown by leaders at the summit, but admitted the many problems remaining in the complex climate negotiations. END SUMMARY.

LEADER'S OPENING COMMENTS  
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¶2. (U) The September 22 climate summit opening plenary included remarks by the SYG Ban Ki-moon, several invited guest speakers, and leaders of the United States, Maldives, China, Japan, Rwanda, Sweden, Costa Rica, and France (in order of appearance). All statements either made in person or submitted to the UN website are available at [www.un.org/wcm/content/site/climatechange/gat\\_away](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/climatechange/gat_away).

¶3. (U) SYG Ban called for a commitment to the Copenhagen negotiations on climate change by empowering negotiators with new flexibility and urged offers instead of demands for concessions. Ban reiterated the four essential elements of any new climate agreement: an adherence to scientific fact, adaptation assistance for the poorest nations, financial resources to address mitigation, adaptation and technology transfer; and an acceptable governance structure. After Ban's remarks, the General Assembly hushed to hear President Obama's first-ever address at the UN, including his call for the phase-out of government subsidies for fossil fuels to be further discussed later that week at the G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh.

¶4. (U) President of the Republic of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, faulted his own nation for consistently pointing out the danger of climate change, but not pointing the way to a solution. Nasheed received loud applause from Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) delegates when he said that developed nations must accept binding emission reduction target consistent with an average temperature increase below 1.5 degrees Celsius. China President Hu Jintao, in his historic first address at the UN, laid out his own four global principles for meeting the climate change challenge: fulfilling respective responsibilities and the need to follow the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", achieving mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, promoting common development between nations, and ensuring that financing and technology are made available to

promote green technologies. He described some ongoing Chinese efforts concerning energy efficiency, developing renewable energy and nuclear energy, increasing forest coverage by 40 million hectares by 2020, and stepping up efforts to develop green technology; but he did not announce any new Chinese commitments that many had been led to expect.

¶5. (U) New Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama repeated his post-election pledge (with certain caveats) to reduce Japan's emission by 25 percent by 2020. He called on developed nations to develop rules to encourage private-sector financing and establish a framework for the transfer of green technology to developing nations while protecting intellectual property rights. Rwandan President Paul Kagame called for changing the current carbon cap and trade system to allow a greater flow of funds to more developing nations. Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt described efforts made by Europe to address climate change but said Copenhagen must go further. Costa Rican President Oscar Sanchez described defense spending as a savings account to draw from to combat climate change.

¶6. (U) French President Nicolas Sarkozy closed the national leaders' opening remarks. He made two proposals which drew loud applause from some of the crowd: he resurrected President Chirac's call for creating a "UN Environment Organization," but with the twist that such an entity should manage the world's actions on climate change. He also called for the heads of state from the world's main economies to meet in mid-November to table concrete proposals for the December Copenhagen dialogue.

#### PRERECORDED VIDEO STATEMENTS

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¶7. (U) To the consternation of many member countries, the Summit on Climate Change adopted a novel approach to accommodating in a short time span statements by member states. Rather than spend days allowing each leader the chance to address the body in person, leaders not speaking in the Opening Plenary were invited to submit prerecorded video statements that were posted on the Summit on Climate Change website and on YouTube.com. The Secretariat received 50 submissions.

¶8. (U) The various submissions generally fall under three categories: developed countries, developing countries, and small island nations fearful for their very survival. The developed countries, for the most part, reaffirmed previous commitments to limit the increase in global temperatures to no more than two degrees Celsius by stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions at 450 parts per million or lower. These countries highlighted their respective national (or regional in the case of the EU) strategies to control emissions, with the EU also announcing several billion Euros for a fast-track adaptation financing package. Greece, for example, plans to reduce energy consumption by 20 percent by 2020 and cover 20 percent of its energy needs from renewable sources.

¶9. (U) The tone of the developing nations' statements was somewhat less positive. Most developing nations felt owed by the developed nations and want increased access to credit and financing to pay for "greener" technologies. Sri Lanka, for instance, blamed the "ignorance and sheer greed and rapaciousness" of developed countries for the current "dangerous predicament." These countries agree that climate change is a huge problem however; they argue that they cannot afford to take the appropriate measures without substantial assistance. Brazil nevertheless announced a national plan to reduce Amazon deforestation by 80 percent by 2020.

¶10. (U) The statements from the last group of countries, consisting mostly of members of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), consisted of appeals for urgent action as they are rapidly losing their coastlines to rising water

levels. Barbados' summarized the AOSIS position by noting that these countries will be "the first to suffer the most serious and damaging impacts of climate change, even though they have contributed least to the problem."

CLOSING SESSION SEES SYG DEMAND COOPERATION AND

DANISH PM CALLING FOR A CLOSING SUMMIT IN DENMARK

¶11. (U) The Closing Plenary session of the Climate Summit included remarks by leaders and officials from Grenada (speaking on behalf of AOSIS), Sudan (speaking on behalf of the G77), Denmark, and the Secretary-General. Attendance at the final session was noted by observers to be at a lower level and not as well attended as the opening plenary.

¶12. (U) The Prime Minister of Grenada, Tillman Thomas, speaking on behalf of the AOSIS leaders summit that took place the day before, reiterated the grave danger that climate change poses to island states and their ecosystems. He noted that "urgent, decisive, and ambitious actions are necessary at the global level," declaring that, "the cost of inaction far exceeds the cost of action." Specifically, Thomas repeated AOSIS's call for an ambitious effort to keep temperature increases to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, arguing this as the only course of action since "we are at a tipping point."

¶13. (U) The Minister of Environment and Urban Development for Sudan, Mr. Ahmad Babiker Nahar, offered comments on the plight of the developing nations. (Note: The SYG pointedly refused to allow Sudan, as G77 chair, a higher-profile participation in the Summit for the obvious reason of the ICC indictment against President Bashir, and this rankled G77 delegates throughout the weeks leading up to the summit. End note.) Nahar repeatedly spoke about the needs of the G77 and claimed that the cooperative efforts aimed at combating climate change must "be coordinated with social and economic development, the overriding priorities of developing countries." The Minister also pointed repeatedly to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the only authority governing steps forward, a common complaint of the G77 whenever the SYG attempts to raise the profile of climate change at the UN.

¶14. (U) The Danish Prime Minister, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, urged leaders to focus on the December Climate Convention in Denmark (rather than consign Copenhagen as coming too soon for a meaningful outcome). Rasmussen outlined his strong expectations for Copenhagen, noting that the outcome "should

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be ambitious, should be binding, and should adhere to the two degree scenario (for maximum global temperature rise)". He critiqued the current pace of change by nations as insufficient and urged leaders to find a way to do more. Towards this end, the Prime Minister expressed his willingness to invite heads of state to finish the Copenhagen talks at the summit level, if necessary.

¶15. (U) UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon offered his overview of the day's events, which in addition to the statements described above, also included eight small-group roundtable discussions comprising about 25 states each, and a Global Leaders Forum lunch that brought together senior government officials and chief executives of private companies active on climate change issues. U.S. Special Climate Envoy Todd Stern represented the U.S. at both the Leaders Forum Lunch and in the roundtable event to which the U.S. was assigned. In his summary, the SYG noted the need for Copenhagen to lead to a comprehensive deal that supports the needs of developing nations and that is in-line with poverty eradication initiatives. Striking an optimistic note, the SYG said "I sensed a keen willingness for leaders to come together" and then announced his intention to "set up a high-level panel

after Copenhagen" with the aim of assessing strategies for implementing whatever protocols might be adopted there. The SYG finished the Plenary by offering awards to younger environmental activists and showing two historical clips of the Earth rising and setting over the lunar horizon. Later that evening, the SYG hosted 24 heads of state/government to a private dinner lasting nearly three hours, bringing together a range of states big and small, and drawing such leaders as Presidents Obama, Hu, Medvedev and Sarkozy, and Prime Ministers Brown, Rudd and Hatoyama, among others. (Other national leaders at the dinner came from Bangladesh, Guyana, Spain, Kiribati, Norway, Canada, Korea, Denmark, Costa Rica, Italy, Algeria, Sweden, Chile, South Africa, and Brazil. As in 2007, India's Prime Minister notably did not attend the SYG's climate change summit.) Although not formally a part of the official program, the private dinner discussion was likely the highlight of the SYG's day and possibly its most productive element.

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